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Sustainable development: implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa

Report of the Second Committee*

Rapporteur: Mr. Glauco **Seoane** (Peru)

I. Introduction

1. The Second Committee held a substantive debate on agenda item 19 (see A/71/463, para. 2). Action on sub-item (c) was taken at the 20th and 25th meetings, on 24 October and 18 November 2016. An account of the Committee's consideration of the sub-item is contained in the relevant summary records.[1]

II. Consideration of draft resolutions A/C.2/71/L.10 and A/C.2/71/L.38

2. At the 20th meeting, on 24 October, the representative of Thailand, on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the Group of 77 and China, introduced a draft resolution entitled "Implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa" (A/C.2/71/L.10).

3. At its 25th meeting, on 18 November, the Committee had before it a draft resolution entitled "Implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or

* The report of the Committee on this item is being issued in 11 parts, under the symbols A/71/463, A/71/463/Add.1, A/71/463/Add.2, A/71/463/Add.3, A/71/463/Add.4, A/71/463/Add.5, A/71/463/Add.6, A/71/463/Add.7, A/71/463/Add.8, A/71/463/Add.9 and A/71/463/Add.10.

[1] A/C.2/71/SR.20 and A/C.2/71/SR.25.

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Desertification, Particularly in Africa" (A/C.2/71/L.38), submitted by the Vice-Chair of the Committee, Ignacio Diaz de la Guardia (Spain), on the basis of informal consultations held on draft resolution A/C.2/71/L.10.

4. At the same meeting, the Committee was informed that draft resolution A/C.2/71/L.38 had no programme budget implications.

5. Also at its 25th meeting, the Committee adopted draft resolution A/C.2/71/L.38 (see para. 7).

6. In the light of the adoption of draft resolution A/C.2/71/L.38, draft resolution A/C.2/71/L.10 was withdrawn by its sponsors.

III. Recommendation of the Second Committee

7. The Second Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of the following draft resolution:

Implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolution 70/206 of 22 December 2015, as well as other resolutions relating to the implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa,[1]

Reaffirming its resolution 70/1 of 25 September 2015, entitled "Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development", in which it adopted a comprehensive, far-reaching and people-centred set of universal and transformative Sustainable Development Goals and targets, its commitment to working tirelessly for the full implementation of the Agenda by 2030, its recognition that eradicating poverty in all its forms and dimensions, including extreme poverty, is the greatest global challenge and an indispensable requirement for sustainable development, its commitment to achieving sustainable development in its three dimensions — economic, social and environmental — in a balanced and integrated manner, and to building upon the achievements of the Millennium Development Goals and seeking to address their unfinished business,

Reaffirming also its resolution 69/313 of 27 July 2015 on the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development, which is an integral part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, supports and complements it, helps to contextualize its means of implementation targets with concrete policies and actions, and reaffirms the strong political commitment to address the challenge of financing and creating an enabling environment at all levels for sustainable development in the spirit of global partnership and solidarity,

Welcoming the Paris Agreement adopted under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change[2] and its early entry into force, encouraging all parties the Agreement to fully implement it, and encouraging parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change[3] that have not yet done so to deposit their instruments of ratification, acceptance, approval or accession, where appropriate, as soon as possible,

Recalling that, in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the international community committed to combating desertification, restoring degraded

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[1] United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1954, No. 33480.

[2] See FCCC/CP/2015/10/Add.1, decision 1/CP.21, annex.

[3] United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1771, No. 30822.

land and soil, including land affected by desertification, drought and floods, and striving to achieve a land-degradation-neutral world by 2030,

Taking note of resolution 2/24 of 27 May 2016, entitled "Combating desertification, land degradation and drought and promoting sustainable pastoralism and rangelands", adopted by the United Nations Environment Assembly of the United Nations Environment Programme at its second session,[4]

Noting that the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals and targets, including Goal 15 and target 15.3, would serve as an accelerator to ending poverty and hunger, tackling inequality, empowering women and stimulating economic growth,

Noting also that combating desertification, land degradation and drought, including through sustainable land management, can contribute to easing forced migration flows influenced by a number of factors, including economic, social, security and environmental concerns, which can, in turn, reduce current and potential fighting over resources in degraded areas,

Acknowledging that striving to achieve land degradation neutrality would significantly contribute to the three dimensions of sustainable development through the rehabilitation, restoration, conservation and sustainable management of land resources, and that this could potentially involve the development of voluntary national targets, in accordance with the specific national circumstances,

Noting that desertification, land degradation, drought, human activities[5] and climate change are closely related and that, if not addressed, they would pose a serious challenge to sustainable development for all countries, in particular developing countries,

Emphasizing the need to promote sustainable land management, sustainable forest management and the restoration of degraded land in order to combat desertification, land degradation and drought,

Noting the scientific findings of the third Scientific Conference of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa, on the interlinkages between desertification and/or land degradation and climate change and their effects on human well-being,

Recognizing that healthy grassland and rangeland ecosystems can play a significant role in the achievement of the 2030 Agenda,

1. *Takes note* of the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of resolution 70/206 on the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa;[6]

[4] UNEP/EA.2/19.

[5] United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1954, No. 33480, article 1.

[6] A/71/216, sect. II.

2. *Invites* parties affected by desertification, land degradation and drought to scale up their efforts, using available internal and external resources, for the implementation of their national action programmes, as appropriate;

3. *Encourages* developed countries party to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa,[1] to actively support the efforts of developing countries party to the Convention in promoting sustainable land management practices and in seeking to achieve land degradation neutrality, by providing substantial financial resources, facilitated access to appropriate technology and other forms of support, including through capacity-building measures;

4. *Also encourages* developed countries party to the Convention, and invites other countries in a position to do so, multilateral financial institutions, the private sector, civil society organizations and technical and financial institutions:

(a) To provide scientific, technical and financial assistance to help affected countries party to the Convention requesting assistance to set and achieve voluntary land degradation neutrality targets and to implement sustainable land management practices and land degradation neutrality initiatives;

(b) To establish equitable partnerships that encourage responsible and sustainable investments and practices by the private sector, which contribute to achieving land degradation neutrality that supports the health and productivity of the land and its people;

5. *Reiterates* that the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development reaffirmed women's vital role and their full and equal participation and leadership in all areas of sustainable development, and in this regard invites donors and international organizations, including the organizations of the United Nations system, as well as the international financial institutions, regional banks and major groups, including the private sector, to fully integrate their commitments and their considerations on gender equality and women's empowerment and to ensure the participation of women and effective gender mainstreaming in their decision-making in combating desertification, land degradation and drought, ensuring that women and men have equal access to and are equal beneficiaries of resources, capacity-building, information and technology and that their needs and contributions are equally taken into account;

6. *Invites* Member States to take action towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and reaching voluntary targets on land degradation neutrality, in accordance with specific national circumstances and development priorities, in line with decisions adopted at the twelfth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa, and welcomes the fact that a large number of Member States are already undertaking efforts to do so;

7. *Stresses* the importance of the further development and implementation of scientifically based, sound and socially inclusive methods and indicators for monitoring and assessing the extent of desertification, land degradation and drought, as well as the importance of efforts under way to promote scientific research in accordance with the Convention, and in this respect invites the secretariats of the

United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change[3] and the Convention on Biological Diversity,[7] within their respective mandates, to collaborate on their activities whenever they are related to desertification, land degradation and drought;

8. *Recognizes* the benefits gained from cooperation through the sharing of climate and weather information, forecasting and early warning systems related to desertification, land degradation and drought, while also taking account of dust storms and sandstorms, at the global, regional and subregional levels, and in this regard likewise recognizes the need for further cooperation between States and relevant organizations in the sharing of related information, forecasting and early warning systems;

9. *Notes* the holding of the first African Drought Conference in Windhoek from 15 to 19 August 2016, which adopted a common strategic framework for a drought-resilient and prepared Africa and the Windhoek Declaration for Enhancing Resilience to Drought in Africa;

10. *Notes* the direction provided by the parties to the Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa, to the secretariat of the Convention, as the lead organization for combating desertification, land degradation and drought, to take the initiative and invite other relevant agencies and stakeholders, such as United Nations agencies, international organizations, financial institutions, civil society organizations and the private sector, to seek cooperation to achieve target 15.3 of Sustainable Goal 15;

11. *Reiterates* that degraded land, if recovered, would, inter alia, contribute to restoring natural resources, thus potentially improving food security and nutrition in the affected countries, and in the process could, inter alia, contribute to the absorption of carbon emissions;

12. *Takes note* of the action already taken by the secretariat of the Convention in leading and coordinating global partnership processes relevant to the voluntary land degradation neutrality target setting programme at the national level to be coordinated by Governments, in accordance with their specific national circumstances, and the development of methodology and data options by the interagency advisory group to contribute to the work of the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators;

13. *Requests* the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its seventy-second session a report on the implementation of the present resolution, and decides to include in the provisional agenda of its seventy-second session, under the item entitled "Sustainable development", the sub-item entitled "Implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa", unless otherwise agreed.

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[7] United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1760, No. 30619.